

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Governor Rell, in Ceremony, Signs 'Safe Rides' Bill**



In a ceremony where she was surrounded by teen drivers, community leaders and legislators, Governor M. Jodi Rell today signed a bill exempting 16- and 17-year-old drivers participating in the "Safe Rides" program from the Connecticut law restricting overnight driving by young people.

"We will never know how many lives have been saved through Safe Rides," said Governor Rell. "As a mother who has lived through two teen drivers, I understand the importance of this legislation. This is more than common sense. It's just plain smart to make sure that an important, potentially life-saving program like Safe Rides, is protected. Safe Rides is about teens helping teens, and safeguarding this important program is clearly the right thing to do."

Under current law, 16- and 17-year-olds are prohibited from driving between midnight and 5 a.m. unless they are going to or from work, a school or religious activity or for a medical necessity. This bill adds those who are participating in a Safe Rides program to the list of exemptions.

Safe Rides provides drivers to teens who are intoxicated or otherwise impaired or unable to drive home. Many Connecticut communities support Safe Rides programs.

"Sometimes we pass legislation with the best of intentions, and then find out later that perhaps we've gone too far, or that some people or some program was included that never should have been," Governor Rell told the group at the Ridgefield Community Center today. "That was the case with this bill, when we realized there was an obvious need for an exemption for the many young people who work with Safe Rides."

"In the past, Darien's successful Safe Rides program was staffed with very responsible teens," said State Rep. John J. Ryan, R-Darien, who attended the ceremony. "This legislation makes a very important change that allows teens to return to volunteering for the program, which meets a key need for our community's young people."

The bill is Senate Bill 328, *An Act Concerning the Department of Motor Vehicles*.



*State Rep. John J. Ryan (right) looks on as Governor M. Jodi Rell signs legislation into law on July 25 allowing teen drivers to participate in the Safe Rides program. Darien is one of several communities in Connecticut that have a safe rides program.*